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New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/56/1 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): The despicable acts of violence committed on 11 September in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania have cast a sombre shadow over the opening of this year's General Assembly session. The outrage of the Government and the people of Jamaica at the terrible toll in death and injury has already been conveyed to the Government and the people of the United States of America, but I wish to reiterate our sincere sympathy and profound condolences to the bereaved families. The orchestration of the attacks forcefully underscores the need for the international community to urgently take effective measures to eliminate terrorism in all its forms. It is therefore fitting that the General Assembly will hold a debate on this issue on 1 October.

I should like to extend my warmest congratulations to the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea on his election as the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session and assure him of the full cooperation and support of the Jamaican delegation. I would also like to express our deepest appreciation to Mr. Harri Holkeri for his excellent leadership of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election as Secretary-General and to reaffirm Jamaica's support for and confidence in him and in his vision for the United Nations.

I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and analytical report on the work of the Organization over the past year, and for the framework for action which he set out to deal with our changed realities. We have noted with satisfaction the report's attention to conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building, within the wider mandate of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

An important achievement during the past year was the Organization's action to improve the way in which peacekeeping operations are designed and implemented, so as to enhance the immediacy of response and the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of assistance in conflict areas. This includes efforts to improve the system of consultation between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. We therefore welcome the adoption of the report of the United Nations Panel on Peace Operations and its implementation plan, and have sought to play an active part in its operationalization.

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Jamaica also welcomes the Secretary-General's demonstrated commitment to promoting a culture of prevention. Within this context, assiduous attention to the root causes of conflict is critical to a proactive, preventive strategy in pre-conflict situations. Experience has shown that effective conflict prevention demands an integrated approach to sustainable economic development, the promotion of social justice and the protection of human rights. Jamaica will therefore continue to advocate a coordinated approach to conflict prevention, involving the entire United Nations system.

The strengthening of civilian missions to enhance post-conflict peace-building strategies is also deserving of greater attention. We continue to be concerned at the relative paucity of resources earmarked for the rebuilding of post-conflict societies. Without this much needed support to make adequate provision for the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and to ensure the establishment of sound institutional infrastructure, the significant investment made in the peacekeeping phase of operations may result in precious little return. We believe that regional and subregional organizations can play an important supportive role. We welcome the multidisciplinary approach taken by the Secretary-General, particularly in regard to situations in West Africa, in cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the proposed establishment of a United Nations Office in West Africa to enhance the Organization's capacity for monitoring, early warning and conflict prevention in the subregion.

In regard to our own region, Jamaica places great store in the continued work of the Organization of American States and of the Caribbean Community in Haiti, in cooperation with the United Nations.

The urgency of humanitarian concerns in conflict areas has brought into sharper focus the need to protect civilians affected by armed conflict. Deliberate attacks against civilians, humanitarian workers and other non-combatants demonstrate that there is a clear need for the Organization to continue to insist on full respect at all levels for the principles of international law, particularly human rights and humanitarian law. It is incumbent on the international community to ensure that those who target civilians are brought to justice. To this end, we strongly support the work of the international criminal tribunals and look forward to the early establishment of the International Criminal Court.

Jamaica is also particularly gratified at the increased sensitivity to the disproportionate effects of war on women and children, and at the growing appreciation for the valuable contribution that women can make towards the prevention and resolution of conflict. Efforts to ensure adequate representation of women at all levels of the decision-making process, from conflict prevention to peace-building, must therefore be pursued. In this regard, the decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly to incorporate a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations are welcome.

The international community, at its historic Millennium Assembly last year, set the foundation and framework for a people-centred development agenda. We committed ourselves to the implementation of a strategy to enrich and sustain the quality of life of the broadest cross-section of the world's people, particularly the poor.

As we now seek to consolidate the institutional priorities for the United Nations, let us ensure that the security and well-being of the individual continues to assume a central place on our agenda. The Secretary-General's "Road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration" (A/56/326) is an important contribution. So, too, are the intergovernmental processes that engaged our attention over the past year.

In July, the pledge of the international community to implement measures aimed at eradicating extreme poverty was reaffirmed in the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. Our engagement in the preparatory processes for the special session on children, the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development has demonstrated, at the very least, a readiness to grapple with the vexing issues and the challenges that represent the spectrum of the development agenda.

We also reviewed, as a matter of urgency, the alarming spread of HIV/AIDS and its devastating effect on seriously affected States. Our attention was given in particular to the plight of Africa, where the ravages of the disease overwhelm the health-care systems, destroy the social fabric, undermine the development capacity of many economies and decimate populations. The fortunes of the countries of the

Caribbean are but one step removed from that of Africa, our subregion claiming the second fastest prevalence rate in the world.

It is appropriate that the threat of HIV/AIDS is being addressed as a development challenge — one that threatens not only the future growth and prosperity of the affected countries, but also the security of States. Jamaica welcomed the plan of action adopted at the twenty-sixth special session in June, which expresses a global commitment to battling this epidemic at the national, regional and international levels. It is our hope that this international commitment will find expression in technical and financial support on the part of the United Nations system.

The importance, too, of this year's review of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda should not be overlooked. For in this new urban millennium, in which more than half of the people of the world will live in large cities, urbanization will present formidable challenges for sustainable human development. Increasing urban poverty, particularly in developing countries, has resulted in exponential growth of squatter settlements, taxing physical and social infrastructure, with serious attendant environmental problems. Indeed, to achieve effective human settlement is to address integrally the urban issues of poverty, homelessness, unemployment and the marginalization of the most vulnerable groups in our societies.

Let us therefore use the momentum of Istanbul+5 to renew our commitment to improving the state of our human settlements; to ensuring adequate shelter for our poor; and to promoting urban development and renewal. In this effort we encourage a participatory approach, with Governments working in partnership with all local stakeholders, the private sector and community groups.

Jamaica remains deeply concerned at the alarming spread of the illicit arms trade, which contributes to the escalation and perpetuation of violence in the communities of Member States, undermining human rights and increasing the threat to both personal security and the stability of society. We therefore welcomed the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It represents an important first step on the part of all Member States towards embracing a meaningful strategy to combat the illegal trade in small arms at the national, regional and international levels.

The open debate on small arms convened by the Security Council in August also acknowledged the proliferation of small arms as a critical factor undermining the efforts of the international community to maintain international peace and security. The indiscriminate use of these weapons in conflict and post-conflict areas has contributed to the breakdown of peace agreements and to the frustration of peacekeeping and peace-building efforts. The readiness of the Security Council to consider taking integrally into account the impact of the proliferation of small arms on its work is, in our view, a very promising sign, and one that is long overdue. We believe that the time has come for all of the organs of the United Nations system to pursue a more comprehensive and coordinated strategy, so as to fashion an effective response to what has increasingly become a complex challenge to disarmament, development, democracy and human security.

Consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization should not be considered complete without an assessment of the capacity of the United Nations to implement the mandates of the General Assembly. That there has been no budgetary growth for the past four bienniums has disturbing implications for the ability of the Organization to respond to new mandates and emerging issues. As the Secretary-General has reminded us, we must prepare for the possibilities of the future and meet the new demands made on the United Nations. The continued recourse to borrowing from the peacekeeping accounts because of the shortfalls in the payments of contributions by Member States is therefore disconcerting.

Our collective goal must be to ensure that the Organization is well placed to discharge its responsibilities effectively. The dictates of the present global environment demand it.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, we wish to thank the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, for the report contained in document A/56/1. We consider it to be a very thorough and lucid account of the wide range of activities conducted by the United Nations during the last year. We feel perhaps that the report lacks a connecting idea, which some of the previous reports had. However, we recognize that the

year covered by the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly was an exceptional period, marked at its outset by the historic Millennium Summit and, over the year's course, by several important events, including the extremely smooth and well-deserved re-election of the Secretary-General to a second term.

Nobody could have imagined that the year would end with an event that has shaken us all, occurring, as the Secretary-General himself reminded us in the addendum of 14 September, just 24 hours after the publication of the report. The terrorist acts of 11 September, to which the General Assembly and the Security Council reacted immediately, will surely have implications of primary importance for our daily lives, on international relations and on the United Nations. We will begin the examination of the subject on 1 October. For that reason, I will refrain from speaking on this subject until that occasion, though it is on all of our minds and is the backdrop to the discussions of these days.

However, the situation we face does allow us to underline, still more than ever, the indispensable nature of the United Nations, or, as the Secretary General put it, "its enduring significance" as the only universal organism at our disposal for collectively dealing with the common challenges we face. We are concerned that this so very fundamental idea is questioned in many circles, as became clear, for example, from the reactions encountered at, and even the confrontations arising in, the recent World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. We therefore wish to reaffirm that today we need the United Nations more than ever. The range of issues covered in the report of the Secretary-General, combined with recent events that have affected us deeply, are the most eloquent confirmation of that.

There is much in the report to commented on and so little time to do so. As a result, I would just like to signal a few aspects of the report of particular interest to my country.

First, the extraordinary contribution that peace operations have made in keeping and building peace in several regions in the world, particularly in Africa. For our part, we fully appreciate the presence of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, and we take due note of and agree with the statement by the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 65 of the report.

Secondly, we also applaud the extensive work of the Organization in the area of humanitarian aid. My country has witnessed the effectiveness of the United Nations in dealing with natural disasters, which, unfortunately, have afflicted my region disproportionately in recent years.

.Thirdly, we believe that one of the most important achievements of last year was the holding of the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS and the Declaration of Commitment approved there. The implementation of the agreement will impact on public awareness and will undoubtedly help to deal with the effects of the pandemic and of related diseases, such as tuberculosis and malaria.

Fourthly, in our ongoing effort to contribute to disarmament, we regret that the results of the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects have fallen short of our expectations.

Fifthly, we agree with the Secretary-General on the importance of fully implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Panel on Peace Operations and on the importance of considering the proposals before us to strengthen the peacekeeping capacity of the United Nations.

Sixthly, we stress the importance of the work of the Organization for fomenting cooperation for development. In this regard, we believe that one of the activities of greatest relevance and potential at our disposal is the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, next March. In this connection, I would also like to mention the Rio+10 summit to be held in Johannesburg.

Seventhly, we believe that the report, in chapter III, underestimates the contribution and potential of the regional commissions towards the work of the Organization. Notable in this context is the report's virtual omission of the activities of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Eighthly, we share the Secretary-General's proposal to make ourselves more open to our respective civil societies. In this regard, we support the more active participation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in our deliberations.

Ninthly, having had the privilege of presiding over the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly during its fifty-fifth session, we wish to ratify the elementary principle that all Member States must pay their dues on time, in full and without conditions attached. We feel too that the time has come to abandon the zero-growth policy in the budget for the biennium 2002-2003 if the Organization is to fully meet its obligations.

Finally, in spite of the events of 11 September, we believe that a long-term vision for the work of the Organization is appropriately set out in the Millennium Declaration. We look forward eagerly to action on the Secretary-General's plan for the full implementation of the various elements of that Declaration.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his report to the General Assembly on the work of the Organization, document A/56/1. That comprehensive and complete report outlines the challenges facing the United Nations in its quest for peace, security and development. It thus helps advance our discussion about possible approaches to future collective action by the international community. The Secretary-General's contribution should form a basis upon which we can unite our efforts to strengthen the work of the Organization.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the pursuit of international peace and progress requires the sustained commitment and engagement of the community of nations, but our task today is to work to make a reality of the principles of the Millennium Declaration, which aroused such high hopes and which calls upon us to set the priorities of an international community which expects greater justice, progress and freedom.

In the chapter entitled "Achieving peace and security" — two key spheres of United Nations activity — priority is given to the prevention of armed conflict. It is indeed time to make prevention central to international efforts towards peace and development. We must promote a true culture of prevention. In that context, we welcome last June's report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict (A/55/985-S/2001/574 and Corr.1). As members are aware, Tunisia is strongly committed to the United Nations so that the international community can catch disputes before they descend into open conflict.

Among that report's recommendations are some that the Secretary-General reiterates in the report before us today, notably on an integrated strategy to strengthen the capacity of United Nations bodies and agencies, to include increased use of multisectoral fact-finding missions and confidence-building measures in volatile regions.

Here, with respect to paragraph 19, I want to stress that we agree that a well-planned and coordinated peace-building strategy can play a significant role in conflict prevention. That approach has the further advantage of saving human lives — not to mention the budgetary resources of the Organization.

Before moving on from the chapter on peace and security, I want to thank the Secretary-General for his overview of developments in various areas of tension throughout the world where the United Nations is present in one way or another. I want also to say that at a time when there has been progress in the situation in some of those areas, it is frustrating to note that in the Middle East there has been a serious deterioration in the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. The peace process remains blocked, and the Mitchell report cannot even be implemented owing to the policies and practices of the Tel Aviv Government. While our appreciation goes to our wise Secretary-General for his efforts to help resolve the crisis, we stress the need for action by the international community towards resuming negotiations between the parties. We also reaffirm the urgent need for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Middle East conflict on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the basis of the principle of land for peace.

Turning to development — which is synonymous with peace — we note with interest the chapter entitled "Cooperation for development". We agree with the Secretary-General's analysis of the international situation and the prospects for collective action in this sphere. As the Secretary-General observes, the United Nations continues to dedicate substantial resources to supporting Governments in the implementation of their development objectives and priorities. The United Nations is more than an essential forum; it is an irreplaceable tool for stimulating and catalysing international cooperation for development.

There are so many challenges, such as: the extreme poverty and destitution that are widespread

throughout the world; underdevelopment; appalling inequality; devastating pandemics; environmental degradation; the digital divide; and many others. The situation is such that, in this era of globalization, we wonder, along with some economists, whether it would be better for many, many countries first of all to be integrated into the international economy. Is it not time for the international community, at the dawn of the new century, to redouble its efforts and accelerate the many kinds of cooperation to meet all these challenges, with respect for human dignity, equality and equity, as advocated by world leaders in the Millennium Declaration?

As the Secretary-General notes, there are many ways for the international community of nations to act. These include the mobilization of resources for development and for poverty eradication; the creation of new opportunities for the poorest and least developed nations; the promotion of social development and of sustainable development; and other kinds of action as well. In due course, my country will reaffirm its proposals on this subject.

We endorse the Secretary-General's analysis in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the report, which rightly highlights the intrinsic link between the crucial areas of financing, trade and development. Hence the urgent need for robust action to find satisfactory solutions to the problems of indebtedness of the developing countries and the access of their commodities to the markets of the developed countries; hence, too, the importance of significantly increasing foreign direct investment and of reversing the downward trend of official development assistance so that we may again progress towards achieving the goal of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of the developing countries.

In this context, the upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held from 18 to 22 March 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico, is of very special importance. We welcome the Secretary-General's decision to establish a High-Level Panel On Financing For Development to draft a report to assist Governments in fine-tuning their proposals for the Monterrey Conference. The Summit scheduled to be held in South Africa in 2002 will give the international community another opportunity to reinvigorate its commitment to sustainable development.

Making globalization a positive force for all mankind is the major challenge before us today, according to the Millennium Declaration. The fruits of globalization cannot benefit everyone unless we find appropriate responses to the structural problems of the developing countries. On this will depend the balance of societies in the world that we wish to build for the future, for the current and coming generations — a world that must be just and equitable and in which the values of liberty, equality and solidarity will ultimately find full expression.

To that end, the ever-renewed commitment and resolve of nations are desirable — indeed, necessary — in building tomorrow's world, rekindling hope and repulsing such threats as poverty and destitution. Human dignity is one and indivisible. It is therefore entirely appropriate that the Secretary-General, at the very beginning of his report, stresses the importance of the ongoing commitment of the community of nations.

Africa requires special attention, as called for in the Millennium Declaration. It has made enormous sacrifices to carry out the necessary structural, political, economic and social reforms. It has clearly demonstrated its determination to take charge of its destiny, as the Secretary-General recalls. Nonetheless, the many challenges facing the continent are thwarting its efforts, inescapably requiring a substantial contribution from the international community. The United Nations is the forum towards which Africa naturally turns. I wish to reiterate here our appeal for increased mobilization on the part of the international community on behalf of Africa, its peoples and their human rights, including their right to development and prosperity.

In the chapter on the international legal order, the Secretary-General stresses important developments in a number of issues related to the consolidation of the rule of law. Terrorism is one of those issues. The horrendous terrorist attacks perpetrated on 11 September against facilities in the United States of America shed a drear light on the question of international terrorism and prompt a number of questions of crucial importance, among which: What should we do to protect ourselves against this devastating scourge? While we wait for a response to emerge from the necessary discussion, one thing is sure: the international community cannot afford to continue to address this question as it has done heretofore. We must acquire the means to defend ourselves against this scourge. On 1 October, we will return to this idea in the debate on this subject.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to reiterate to Mr. Kofi Annan our heartfelt congratulations on his unanimous election to a second term of office as Secretary-General. We wish him every success in his task, which is enormous but within his capacities to tackle.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria): I would like to congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election and, through him, his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for a very successful fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I wish to assure the President and members of the Bureau of the cooperation and support of my delegation towards the successful completion of this session under his presidency.

My delegation congratulates the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his re-election and expresses its profound appreciation for his report on the work of the Organization. The report discusses clearly some of the most pressing issues currently confronting humanity, such as violent conflicts, international terrorism, human rights abuses, deplorable humanitarian conditions, increased numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the problems of sustainable development.

The issue of conflicts and the achievement of global peace and security remains one of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century. While my delegation recognizes the fact that the United Nations, through the Security Council, has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, a successful conflict prevention strategy will require the cooperation of all.

My delegation therefore commends the efforts of the Secretary-General in his use of the tools of quiet diplomacy, such as fact-finding and confidence-building missions, an informal network of eminent persons, mediation, conciliation and arbitration, in the search for peace. We support the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report on the use of interdisciplinary fact-finding and confidence-building missions to volatile regions and particularly commend the recent mission dispatched to West Africa, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Millennium Declaration called for enhanced institutional cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the search for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. We are delighted to note the success of such an approach, as demonstrated in West Africa, where the United Nations, in active collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union countries, participated in addressing complex humanitarian, political and security situations affecting Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The United Nations continues to support ECOWAS initiatives in the promotion of dialogue among the three countries in the belief that, without such dialogue, efforts to address the root causes of the subregion's problems will remain ineffective.

The Nigerian delegation therefore welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendation to develop regional strategies that will include regional actors in finding solutions to conflicts. I appeal for financial and logistical assistance to such regional and subregional organizations in order to enhance their effectiveness. Furthermore, considering the importance of an effective Secretariat to the overall success of conflict prevention, we request that the necessary funds be made available to the Secretary-General on request to enable the Secretariat cope effectively with the complexities of today's conflicts.

Nigeria is deeply concerned about acts of international terrorism, of which we have all been victims recently. It will be recalled that our delegation participated in the preparation of the General Assembly Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, in 1994, and the supplementary Declaration, years later. Nigeria is ready to cooperate with other members of the international community through bilateral and multilateral efforts to suppress all forms of terrorism. We condemn in the strongest terms all acts of terrorism and stress that terrorists should not be allowed political haven as asylum-seekers or granted refugee status in any country. It is also important that we expose those who support those terrorists under whatever guise. Furthermore, we support current effort to adopt a convention on the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

In the Millennium Declaration our leaders resolved to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to reduce the global risk posed by small arms and landmines. The continued proliferation of small arms is a source of concern for us and, indeed, for all developing countries. The international community should not fail to take

cognizance of the correlation between instability, the proliferation of small arms and the incidence of conflict. Africa remains the most affected region, considering the devastation that small arms-aided conflicts have wreaked on communities, societies and States. It is against this background that we welcome the objectives of the recently concluded United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We urge the international community to take concrete steps to ensure effective control of the circulation of small arms.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to pose serious challenges to our developmental efforts. We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations and the contributions of the international community in combating the HIV/AIDS scourge, particularly in Africa. We endorse the call made by the Secretary-General during the twenty sixth special session of the General Assembly, on HIV/AIDS, for a new global campaign in the fight against HIV/AIDS. We also endorse the Plan of Action adopted at the special summit of the Organization of African Unity on AIDS, which was intended to translate into concrete initiatives the commitments made by African leaders to intensify their efforts and mobilize resources for the prevention, care and treatment of the disease. We further endorse the proposal by the Secretary-General for the establishment of a Global AIDS and Health Fund in order to mobilize the funds necessary to address the AIDS epidemic.

One of the greatest scourges confronting mankind today is poverty. A situation where more than half of the world's population lives on less than $2 per day is not only totally unacceptable. It is also an indictment on humanity and globalization. While globalization has rapidly integrated countries through trade, investment flows and information and communications technologies in our era of a knowledge-based global economy, it is vital that its benefits should no longer be confined to the prosperity of a few developed countries and peoples. The increasing level of poverty in developing countries, particularly in Africa, remains a burden on the resources available to those countries for development. That is why Nigeria welcomes the decision of world leaders to wage a war on poverty by launching a sustained campaign to make the right to development a reality. African leaders have established a new initiative based on a common vision and shared conviction that we have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to put our countries on the path of sustainable socio-economic growth and development. We therefore look forward to the support and enabling partnership of the international community for the success of the New African Initiative.

I cannot conclude this statement without making reference to the issue of human rights. Bridging the gap between human rights norms and their implementation continues to pose a substantial challenge for our Organization. My delegation therefore endorses the call by the Secretary-General for Member States to ratify the six core United Nations human rights treaties and the Statute of the International Criminal Court. We also support the need to strengthen the International Court of Justice as a vital organ in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In conclusion, my delegation is pleased to note that commendable efforts have been made by the Secretary-General to implement reforms aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the Organization. In general, we are satisfied with the various initiatives being undertaken by the Secretary-General. We pledge our continued cooperation in the efforts to strengthen our Organization.

Mr. Petrič (Slovenia): Allow me to congratulate President Han Seung-soo on his assumption of the presidency of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. He and the Bureau have the full confidence and support of my country in carrying out their important tasks.

I would also like to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for yet another comprehensive and concise annual report on the work of the Organization. We are inspired by his resolution to bring the United Nations closer to all people and to revive confidence in our global partnership. We are glad that his leadership, experience, vision and humanity will continue to be devoted to our Organization in the coming years.

The annual report makes a good presentation of our past achievements and provides a number of ideas on how to conduct the activities of United Nations in the future. Together with the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the annual report provides us an opportunity to present our views on the issues before us and to chart the action to be taken by the United Nations and the General Assembly.

We are still horrified by the loss of the lives of fellow New Yorkers and others caused by brutal terrorists. The United Nations has a great role to play in the fight against terrorism. Close cooperation in the suppression of terrorism is in the interest of every civilized nation, as terrorism is an international and global scourge affecting the lives of each and every one of us. We must now stand together and make sure that the perpetrators are brought to justice, wherever they may be. No country should be allowed to provide safe haven for terrorists anymore. The Security Council and the General Assembly should take appropriate further steps to make that happen. It is a difficult task and may take some time to realize, but it fits the United Nations perfectly. The United Nations role is indeed central here, since combating terrorism in the long run also means eradicating its roots — hatred, racism and poverty in particular.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the fundamental purpose of the United Nations. Peacekeeping operations are of particular importance. We are pleased that the Brahimi recommendations have been well received and are supported by the Security Council. As a way of contributing to ensuring adequate resources for peacekeeping, Slovenia decided last year to voluntarily relinquish the discount in the peacekeeping scale of assessments that it has enjoyed. It is encouraging that the Secretariat is now finalizing a practical guide for Headquarters support for the missions in the field by formulating coherent peace-building strategies. Those are, indeed, essential in conflict prevention. We are also pleased that such strategies increasingly include protection of civilians, in particular women and children.

To prevent tragedies of massive proportions such as those in Rwanda and Srebrenica, Slovenia pointed out last year the need to prepare the ground for adequate preventive action, including humanitarian action, if and when it becomes necessary. We are still of the opinion that the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, should be the framework for such action. However, we should not run the risk of neglect of the problem of humanitarian action resulting in a tendency for our Organization to be bypassed when such action is taken.

Conflict prevention and human security should be central among the United Nations preoccupations. During our presidency in November 1999, Slovenia initiated the first open session of the Security Council on conflict prevention. It gives us great pleasure now to welcome the first report (A/55/985) of the Secretary-General on conflict prevention and the report's tangible and comprehensive recommendations. We agree that effective conflict prevention should address the root causes of conflicts and embrace both short- and long-term political, economic, humanitarian and other measures. We consider this report an important step on the road to establishing a working culture of prevention.

The Secretary-General in his annual report pointed out that the international tribunals have made significant advances. We share the view that they indeed contribute to peace and justice.

A large majority of States have clearly demonstrated their will to put an end to impunity by adopting the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We hope that the Statute will enter into force soon. For the first time, those responsible for the most heinous crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes will be brought to justice, no matter where the crimes have been committed. This should most certainly improve the future conduct of both States and individuals.

The capacity to adjust to new conditions is crucial for the future role of the United Nations. When reforming our main organs — and we should reform them — we should stick less to our own perceptions and try harder in the coming years to reach a consensus that will enable our Organization to best adapt to the changing world. It is also important that the members of the Security Council understand that the legitimacy of their decisions rests on the support of the entire membership of the United Nations, and that transparency of the Security Council's work can often contribute to better compliance with its decisions.

Globalization is an ongoing and unavoidable process. To reap the benefits of globalization and diminish its negative effects, we have to be able to responsibly master this phenomenon through ever-closer dialogue and partnerships among all sectors of our societies. The challenge of globalization does not bear only on its economic, financial and social aspects. It brings also new challenges to the maintenance of peace and security and to the establishment of a common system of values. We in the United Nations bear a special responsibility to ensure that the benefits

of globalization be spread equitably and that the non-privileged will not suffer its ill consequences.

In the past year there have been important international conferences at which the United Nations addressed some crucial contemporary questions facing the international community. These include the General Assembly special session on HIV/AIDS, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We consider that these conferences made an important contribution and are proof of the vitality of our Organization.

Let me mention also the recent Managua meeting, which was an important step in the framework of the Ottawa Convention to eradicate anti-personnel land mines from the face of the earth. I am proud to report again on Slovenian endeavours in this field. The International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance, based in my capital, continues to be the most important actor in demining in the Balkans.

In conclusion, let me point out that another world summit for children is an initiative particularly close to the heart of Slovenia, and we look forward to its convening as soon as practicable. We in Slovenia traditionally give great attention to our children and to the activities of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Slovenia decided this year to double its contribution to UNICEF. An investment in the care of and compassion for children is an investment in enhancing the values of the civilization and human security of tomorrow. Therefore, we are particularly pleased that care for children is gaining ever more attention within the entire United Nations system.

Mr. Li Hyong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I first congratulate the President on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.

My delegation expresses its great appreciation to the Secretary-General for presenting his report on the work of the Organization.

I also take this opportunity to express once again our deep regret over the tragic terrorist incidents that occurred in the United States on 11 September and the many innocent lives that were lost.

My delegation has followed with close attention the issues of international security, conflict prevention and the eradication of poverty, as dealt with in the report of the Secretary-General. We share his view that it is the major task of the United Nations to ensure peace and security for all countries in the new millennium.

As we entered the new millennium, arguments designed to destroy the concept of sovereignty and promote "humanitarian intervention" presented major challenges to the independent development of humankind. Acts threatening and violating State sovereignty have become undisguised, and most conflicts remain unresolved because of external interference. Where the sovereignty of States is violated, rights to economic development — and even the right to survival — are seriously infringed.

The Charter defines the maintenance of international peace and security as the main purpose of the Organization and the recognition of and respect for the sovereign equality of all Member States as its fundamental principle. This principle was reaffirmed at the Millennium Summit last year.

The United Nations should pay particular attention to ensuring that big countries refrain from threatening the sovereignty of small and weak countries and from taking advantage of conflicts to achieve domination. The nuclear-weapon States should create the confidence necessary to realize comprehensive and complete disarmament, by taking such practical measures as presenting a timetable for scrapping nuclear weapons.

In order to address the challenges facing the international community, the application of a double standard should be rejected and fairness and impartiality should be ensured in United Nations activities. In international relations the exercise of power by big countries is tacitly accepted now, whereas the self-defence measures of small countries are subject to becoming targets of sanctions and pressure. If we are to check this unfairness and the use of double standards, the leading role of the United Nations, particularly the functions and the role of the General Assembly, should be enhanced. The General Assembly, as the highest United Nations organ, should decide on all issues related to international peace and security, so that the other organs do not adopt any resolutions that run counter to the will of the Member States. We consider it necessary to take appropriate steps for the Special Committee on the Charter of the United

Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organizations to take up this issue and present recommendations to the General Assembly.

If United Nations activities are to be democratized, the Security Council should be reformed. In this regard, it will be appropriate to make a breakthrough in reform by, above all, reaching agreement on increasing the non-permanent membership, a matter that can be agreed somewhat easily.

A year has passed since the Co-Chairpersons of the Millennium Summit issued their statement (A/55/PV.4) and the General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution (55/11) supporting the historic Pyongyang inter-Korean summit and the North-South joint declaration. The miraculous events that took place on the Korean peninsula last year resulted from the independent politics and the idea of great national unity of our respected General Kim Jong Il. North and South Korea have jointly presented the agenda item "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula" again this year, with a view to achieving independent and peaceful reunification, in the spirit of the North-South joint declaration.

I wish to take this opportunity to express thanks to those countries that extend support and solidarity to our efforts to implement the joint declaration, free from outside interference.

Ms. Cedeño Reyes (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of Venezuela, I wish to congratulate the President on his election. His proven experience and skill in exercising high-level public responsibilities guarantee that under his leadership we will be able to move forward in dealing with the topics on the Assembly's agenda. He can count on our cooperation to work constructively and flexibly in this regard.

With respect to the topic before us, I thank the Secretary-General for the timely submission of his annual report on the work of the Organization. The Secretary-General thus fulfils his responsibility to bring to the attention of the Member States the most important world issues and the state of this Organization during the period under review. While recognizing his contribution in this respect, we also congratulate him on the sincerity of his diagnosis and on the strength of convictions that supports his management at the head of the United Nations.

The comments made by the Secretary-General require the attention of our authorities, since they are the ones who must guide the Organization and provide it with a safe direction in the period of transition the international system has gone through in the past few years. In this regard, we must join efforts to ensure that there is no repetition in this century of tragedies such as the recent terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, which my country categorically condemns. We are convinced that the General Assembly can make an important contribution to this review.

The United Nations finds itself facing an international reality that is as promising as it is paradoxical. On the one hand, it is felt that in the context of growing interdependence and globalization, the management of global matters and the search for solutions to problems of common interest are objectives that can only be promoted through United Nations action that provides a balance of different viewpoints and articulates the interests of States. However, those expectations are often limited as a result of the lack of necessary support of its members and of adaptation of its structures to the signs of these new times.

As the Secretary-General points out, the Millennium Summit, which brought together a large number of heads of State and Government, made possible a renewed faith in multilateralism, particularly the United Nations. It also spoke of the need for relevant reforms so that, with the proper resources and based on observance of the purposes and principles of the Charter, it may respond in a timely and decisive manner to the problems posed in the areas of peace and economic and social development.

Despite the major efforts of the Organization to resolve conflict situations in some regions of the world, we note with concern the continuation of unusually violent conflicts in which the civilian population has become a political objective of groups or factions that defy the basic norms of international humanitarian law. Conflict prevention through the eradication of the social and economic causes of conflict is an urgent, inescapable objective for the international community, given the economic and human benefits that can be realized through such a strategy, based on agreed principles of international relations, such as non-intervention, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the peaceful resolution of conflicts and respect for the standards of international law.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the success of the United Nations in the field of prevention depends on the support of Member States, which have the ongoing primary responsibility for dealing with the causes of conflict of an internal nature. We believe that we cannot talk about the delegation of responsibilities, but that, rather, we should guide the Organization in promoting a better practice geared towards international cooperation in the areas of conflict prevention and humanitarian emergencies.

In the area of disarmament and arms control, the balance sheet has been mixed. The policies created in the early 1990s, with the passing of multilateral agreements in this area, have been weakened due to the absence of a sustained effort by certain countries with specific responsibilities in this area and the development of certain events that affect the negotiating climate.

Venezuela believes that the Secretary-General's proposal to convene an international conference on the reduction of nuclear dangers is a positive initiative aimed at identifying ways and means to eliminate nuclear arms in the near future, as agreed at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The problem of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is one of the issues that have been added to the multilateral disarmament agenda. This phenomenon aggravates conflicts that are developing in various regions, threatening the security of States, as well as the economic and social future of peoples affected by such wars.

Venezuela is convinced of the need for the international community to adopt measures, on the basis of international cooperation, to eliminate such illicit activity, which is supported by groups and individuals on the fringes of the law. In this connection, we believe that the agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in July this year, are a positive step on the path towards disarmament and the prevention of conflict.

Globalization is an inexorable force in these times of change and far-reaching transformation. It has created opportunities, such as the expansion of trade and the fast-paced development of information technology. Even when the benefits of the process can be clearly seen, however, it cannot be denied that they are spread unevenly, as the worsening of extreme poverty among large sectors of the global population shows. In order to redress such imbalances, the international community must take concerted action leading to the adoption of concrete measures to prevent marginalization and the social exclusion of those who remain outside that process.

The Millennium Summit made it possible to reassert the objectives of the social platform as set out by the United Nations Conferences on issues such as the environment, social development, women and population, which placed human beings at the centre of development. We must ensure that the objectives set out in the declarations and programmes of action are transformed into specific actions to reduce extreme poverty by half, as agreed. Measures taken by national Governments for the promotion of social objectives should be supported by sustained international cooperation, in a spirit of solidarity, to ensure that efforts to this end are carried out effectively and speedily, thereby helping to overcome deprivation, hunger and poverty.

In the context of this approach based on shared responsibility, Venezuela believes that the convening, in March 2002 in Monterrey, of an International Conference on Financing for Development, will provide an ideal opportunity for both developing and developed countries to act jointly in adopting a series of political measures to promote financial stability and reach consensus on the need to set up a new financial architecture. My country believes that that Conference should also consider the possibility of mobilizing national and international resources for social development with a view to implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, adopting trade-related measures and providing debt relief.

Although progress has been made with regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms as a result of the consolidation and strengthening of democracy in the world, we are concerned about the fact that signs of racism and xenophobia still persist. We had thought that such manifestations, which run counter to human rights and undermine human dignity, were dead and buried. The recent World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which took place in South Africa, provided a unique opportunity for the international community

to adopt measures in response to discrimination on the basis of race, colour or ethnic origin.

With regard to the consolidation of an international order based on the validity of the norms of international law, Venezuela supported from the outset the establishment of an International Criminal Court, and we took part in the process to establish the Court, on the basis of principles of universality, complementarity and autonomy. In that spirit, convinced of the contribution that the Court can make to the cause of peace and respect for international law, through the prosecution and punishment of those responsible for international crimes, and to the prevention of impunity, in June last year the Government of Venezuela deposited its instrument of ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. This act reflects the priority that our country places on improving and ensuring the credibility and transparency of justice in the international sphere. We hope that this legal instrument will enter into force in the near future so that the Court can be set up and begin to function.

Let us put this Organization at the service of peoples by the resolute promotion of the objectives of peace and social and economic development. The objectives agreed at the Millennium Summit by our heads of State or Government must be achieved within the time frame that has been set out. Now is the time for us to take action in order to give concrete form to hopes for a more equitable and just world, in which the eradication of poverty and the promotion of development are a genuine expression of international peace and stability.

Venezuela agrees with the Secretary-General that the United Nations must become a vehicle for the progress of humankind. To that end, Member States should, through international dialogue and cooperation, direct their efforts in order to respond to the challenges of globalization, at the same time taking advantage of the opportunities that it provides. If it is to fully shoulder its responsibilities, the United Nations will have to engage in constant renewal and adaptation to the realities of the day, and it will need the support and understanding of its Member States.

Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like first of all to congratulate Mr. Han, and his country, the Republic of Korea, on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its current session. We are sure that, thanks to his skill and wisdom, our work will be successful.

The General Assembly is beginning its work this year in an atmosphere of sadness and unusual circumstances because of the terrorist attacks that took place on 11 September. My delegation would once again like to convey its deepest sympathy and condolences to the people of the United States and to the families of the victims, whether in the United States or elsewhere, and to express our solidarity with them.

My country and my people understand better than many others the nature of true suffering and the ambiguity of feelings in the wake of such tragedies. Raids on my country in 1986, in which more than 100 aircraft took part and which caused a great deal of destruction and took the lives of many innocent victims, made us aware of such feelings. We welcome and will be taking part in the special debate on terrorism next week, during which my delegation will join others in discussing the subject in detail.

We condemn terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations. However, let me reiterate once again that we believe that terrorism has become a global problem — one that is not restricted only to certain religions or cultures. That is a truth that everyone can understand: terrorist acts occur in all parts of the world. The hatred for Islam, for Arabs, for Muslims that we see in certain parts of the world must be condemned vehemently, just as we condemn terrorism, hatred and racism, wherever they occur.

International terrorism has become a worldwide scourge. Accordingly, the international community must jointly combat its heinous crimes, which target innocent victims. Coordination and cooperation are required. However, dealing with this scourge requires not only that we redouble our efforts in seeking justice, not revenge, but also that international action be based on international law and legitimacy, and that no double standards should exist.

The international community must also draw a distinction between terrorism directed against innocent people and a legitimate struggle against foreign domination and occupation. We therefore call for the convening of an international conference to define terrorism and the means to eliminate it, after determining its diverse causes. That conference should be free from political considerations. As was stated by

the Secretary-General just two days ago when he introduced his report, we should not jump to the conclusion that combating terrorism means a clash between civilizations, religions or cultures. As the Secretary-General said in an article that was published in *The New York Times* and reproduced in the international press, in taking steps against the perpetrators of terrorist acts, we must also deal with the political, economic and social conditions and causes underlying this kind of hatred and aberration in order to restore peace, justice and security in the world.

In the weeks, months and years to come, we will need to base ourselves on international legitimacy and on the United Nations, which we have accepted as being the proper institutional framework for dealing with the global scourges of armed conflict, terrorism, poverty and so on. The heads of State and Government, in adopting the Millennium Declaration, reaffirmed their resolve to work towards a world free of conflict, illiteracy, poverty and disease — a more just and developed world. That historic document reaffirmed the elementary principles of human dignity, justice and equality, as well as the need to resolve disputes by peaceful means, in keeping with the principles of justice and international law and the right of people under occupation to self-determination.

The international community must therefore reaffirm those principles and enhance the capacity of the United Nations to discharge the tasks incumbent upon it in this ever-changing international situation.

We also agree with the view of the Secretary-General that, in this globalized world, cooperation and partnerships are key and that we must share tasks and responsibilities — between nations, Governments and regional and international organizations — so that we can benefit from globalization while averting its negative effects.

We congratulate the Secretary-General on his election to a new term of office. We applaud his enthusiasm and his efforts as well as his initiatives and dedication in trying to strengthen the United Nations — this Organization that is so necessary for dealing with the challenges of the international village in which we all live.

In the context of our efforts to prevent armed conflicts and deal with their underlying causes; provide humanitarian assistance for the more vulnerable sectors of society; encourage international cooperation; protect disadvantaged peoples and strengthen international justice and legality, attempts are being made to marginalize this lofty Organization, whose founding fathers, more than half a century ago, were determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We are also seeing attempts to prevent the Security Council from discharging its task — that is, the maintenance of international peace and security. For instance, we have seen the Security Council paralysed in recent weeks because one permanent member was threatening to use its veto during the discussion of a chronic problem. As a result, the situation in the region under consideration deteriorated, leading to a greater loss of human life than would have occurred otherwise.

We need to accelerate the reform of the United Nations, particularly that of the Security Council. We should increase the Council's membership so that it can discharge its mandate without being held hostage to the domination of one Member State.

We endorse the view of the Secretary-General, expressed in his report, regarding the deterioration of the situation in the Arab countries and the need to find a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of the relevant decisions taken by the United Nations. The spiral of violence in the Arab region is the result of the Zionist military occupation of Palestinian land for more than 34 years. The occupying forces have attempted to expropriate more land and expand existing settlements; to destroy Palestinian infrastructure; to humiliate and subjugate the people; to impose collective sanctions on them; to uproot trees; and to assassinate Palestinian symbols of legitimate resistance.

The debate on sanctions and their effectiveness must continue. As the Secretary-General says, sanctions have untold humanitarian consequences. We are opposed to their imposition, and we call for the use of peaceful means and constructive dialogue in resolving disputes. As stated in the Charter, sanctions must be the last resort after other measures have been attempted.

The political objectives of one State must not prevail over those of others. Sanctions must be lifted as soon as the reasons for their imposition cease to exist, and no pretexts must be used to maintain them. Our country, for example, has suffered from unjust

sanctions, and, as all are aware, all segments of the Libyan population have been affected by them as well.

Although our country has discharged all its obligations pursuant to the relevant Security Council resolutions, sanctions have not yet been totally lifted. The Security Council must restore its credibility by truly seeking to maintain international peace and security pursuant to the Charter; it must not be the political tool of the strongest countries.

We welcome the study of the political and development problems of Africa through the elaboration of a strategy to treat the real reasons for conflict, in the context of cooperation with the regional and subregional organizations. We also welcome United Nations initiatives to give priority to the development issues of Africa. The Millennium Declaration required the United Nations to be a catalyst in mustering resources for the development of all the continent.

We welcome the fact that last July at its high-level segment, the Economic and Social Council endorsed the New African Initiative, adopted at the Lusaka summit. We welcome the creation of the new African Union in Lusaka and the declaration by African States reaffirming their commitment to fighting for sustainable development and to overcoming the present challenges. We hope that, following these initiatives, the General Assembly can take the necessary decisions to resolve African problems, alleviate poverty, relieve debt, deal with diseases such as AIDS and malaria, and develop human and other resources.

Finally, I should like to stress that in our twenty-first century, the world has become a small global village. Every part of the world suffers the consequences, positive or negative, of whatever happens elsewhere. We cannot live separate from each other. Any pressure, any injustice, any social or economic problem, any disease has repercussions throughout the world. Therefore, international political will and international resources must be pooled to extinguish these small fires so that they do not develop into a huge conflagration. Poverty and hunger must be dealt with and overcome. The resources directed to developing lethal weapons must be employed to restore peace, security and justice and a better world in this new millennium.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): At the outset, I would like once again to express my deepest condolences to the people of the United States and to all those affected by the devastating terrorist attacks of 11 September. The Government and the people of Israel, like people all over the world, were shocked and horrified by these tragic events. This is a day that will always live on in our memories, and these memories, to a great extent, must guide our deliberations over the course of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Allow me to congratulate the Secretary-General on his annual report on the work of the Organization. The report clearly describes the challenges facing the international community in our ever-changing world and outlines the ways in which the Organization can continue to act for the betterment of humanity, based on a commitment to the principles of the Charter.

The report correctly focuses on the overriding theme of globalization and the increased interconnectedness and interdependence of our world. It reflects the recognition that globalization not only affords new opportunities but carries with it new threats and new challenges as well. Neither the problems nor the potential of globalization can be addressed by one nation alone, but, rather, require cooperation among States and international organizations. The United Nations has the potential to serve as the primary forum in which the necessary partnerships can be created to address the challenges that confront all of humanity.

As was horrifyingly demonstrated less than two weeks ago in New York and Washington, D.C., the world faces a grave threat from international terrorism. It must now be clear that terrorism is not confined to a particular region or a particular conflict. The forces that have brought the world's information, transportation and financial networks closer together have also brought the threat of terrorism to everyone's doorstep. This is a threat unlike any the world has ever seen before, and it has the potential to undermine our way of life and the survival of freedom and liberty. The international community must mobilize now to confront this threat, to contain it and, ultimately, to eradicate it.

In this regard, the United Nations has a crucial role to play. Terrorism cannot survive for long without the support of States and leaders in different parts of the world who have vowed to inspire, and even

epitomize, the terrorist creed. Terrorists require safe havens in which to escape the rule of law; they require territories in which they can train; and they require financial assistance to fund their operations. These three elements can be provided only by States that either directly support or turn a blind eye to the actions of terrorist groups.

The international community must take the lead in declaring that such behaviour will no longer be tolerated. States that refuse to suppress terrorists that operate in their territory must not be regarded as members in good standing of the family of nations. Those States must be further prevented from assuming leadership roles in international organizations. The United Nations must persevere in the creation of mechanisms with which to identify and take action against States that lend their support to terrorism. Indeed, no challenge is more pressing or more requires concerted international cooperation than the threat of terrorism, and no action more urgently needs our attention.

But the threat of terrorism emerging from certain regions of the world, while a matter of utmost urgency, is far from the only issue with global repercussions. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a catastrophe of global proportions. It is destroying the social and economic life of the most affected countries, but is by no means limited to those particular countries. While sub-Saharan Africa is the region most severely afflicted, the virus is also spreading at an alarming rate in other parts of the world. As the nature and consequences of the problem are global in scope, so must our response be global. All nations, Governments, international organizations, the private sector and individuals must resolve to unite in a comprehensive worldwide effort to halt the spread of AIDS and to care for those already suffering from it.

In that connection, Israel welcomes the Secretary-General's global call to action as well as the establishment of a High-level Inter-Agency Task Force on HIV/AIDS to coordinate the response of the United Nations to this crisis. We further support the establishment of a Global AIDS and Health Fund to combat AIDS, which will position the United Nations to lead the worldwide effort against the spread of the disease.

Israel strongly supports the Secretary-General's initiative to move the Organization from a culture of reaction to one of conflict prevention. Focusing on preventing conflicts is not simply an exercise in the more efficient allocation of resources — which it most certainly is; it also represents a far more effective method of ridding humanity of the scourge of violence and conflict.

As was made clear in the Secretary-General's report on prevention of armed conflict (A/55/985), primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national Governments. The main role of the United Nations should be to support the efforts already under way at the national level. Parties must be encouraged to settle disputes through peaceful means, rather than through violence, in accordance with Article 33 of the United Nations Charter.

To that end, we support the Secretary-General's efforts to foster development and humanitarian projects in troublesome regions, to promote partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations and civil society, and to send multidisciplinary missions to areas of tension before situations spiral out of control.

To increase the effectiveness of such endeavours, the report also deals with modifications of practices within the United Nations system itself. Clearly, a more efficient use of resources, a greater focus on harnessing the power of information technology, and increasing accountability and oversight are all welcome initiatives. In particular, in an organization as vast and diverse as the United Nations, special attention must be directed to facilitating improved communications among departments and agencies, and among United Nations personnel in distant parts of the world. Proper functioning within the United Nations system will vastly improve the ability of the Organization to fulfil its mandate around the globe.

Globalization presents a host of new challenges and new opportunities. The emergence of powerful new tools for communications, for finance and for trade have brought the diverse peoples of the world closer together, provided extraordinary new economic opportunities, and offered the least developed nations a pathway out of poverty. But there are other vicissitudes as well. Globalization can serve to exacerbate inequities, to deepen adverse impact of the digital divide and to benefit some at the expense of others. We must ensure that globalization serves the common good, that it uplifts nations and peoples, and that the

increased openness and freedom of our societies does not become the seed of our destruction. In short, we must work together, both within the United Nations and without, to meet the demands of this new world.

Israel is gratified that the recognition of the necessity of international cooperation is continually reinforced throughout the Secretary-General's report. Just as steps are taken to streamline and improve management within the United Nations system, so must we work to improve our collective management of the forces that are reshaping the world. Only by working together can we ensure that globalization conforms to the highest aspirations of humankind.

That is an objective that is far more achievable than it may appear. Globalization is an opportunity to bring diverse peoples together and to foster an appreciation of our differences and a respect for our common values. It is those values that must be strengthened in all our endeavours, as they form the basis of our quest to rid mankind of the scourge of war and to foster peace and coexistence among all the peoples of the world.

Israel remains committed to the United Nations, to the principles upon which it was founded and to its broad agenda in all the varied areas of human endeavour. We are eager to engage in productive partnerships, to foster greater cooperation among Member States and to do our part to realize the noble objectives for which the Organization was established.

Mr. Ouch (Cambodia): At the outset, allow me to express my sincere congratulations to Mr. Han Seung-soo on his unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. We are confident that under his able guidance the work of this session will be a landmark on the new international scene in terms of facing the new challenges for peace, democracy and progress.

I would take to take this opportunity to reiterate the profound condolences and deepest sympathy which the Royal Government of Cambodia has conveyed to our host country, the United States of America. My delegation condemns strongly those criminal acts of terrorism and supports the inclusion of item 166, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", on the Assembly's agenda at this session. It is anticipated that this issue will be a great challenge in our debate next week.

I would like to join other speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization contained in document A/56/1. The report gives a concise overview of the activities of the United Nations in the areas of peace and security, humanitarian assistance, development, international law, human rights and the reform of the Organization.

The Secretary-General's report makes reference to the Millennium Declaration, whose main thrust is the war against poverty, which should be all-pervasive and all-encompassing. For developing countries, in particular the least developed countries such as Cambodia, one of the main challenges in that war is how to deal with the irreversible process of globalization. The crucial problem is how we can make globalization work to our advantage and how we can integrate our countries into the ever-accelerating process of globalization so that we will not be left behind and continue to be marginalized. The process of globalization, driven by advances in information and communications technology, the increased mobility of capital, reductions in the barriers of trade and the cost of international transactions, is an unprecedented reality, leaving no country immune or able to escape its impact.

It is clear for all to see that the impact of globalization benefits primarily the States that already have a strong grip on their economies, while leaving the least developed countries, such as Cambodia, with few resources, if any, and little assistance to cope with such a crisis. In the end, the rich countries are getting richer and the poor countries are getting poorer. Therefore, my delegation is of the view that all countries of the world should unite their efforts and resources to make sure that the benefits of globalization are spread more equally among the international community and to minimize the negative impact of this phenomenon, enabling least developed countries to continuously develop and provide the necessary tools in order for their peoples to have better lives in years to come.

In his report, the Secretary-General has also placed emphasis on the disaster caused by HIV/AIDS throughout the world. As one of the countries most seriously affected by the worldwide HIV/AIDS pandemic, Cambodia was very pleased by the adoption of the Declaration of Commitment at the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on the problem of HIV/AIDS in June 2001, in accordance

with resolution 55/13, which, in paragraph 1, called on the General Assembly,

> "as a matter of urgency, to review and address the problem of HIV/AIDS in all its aspects, as well as to secure a global commitment to enhancing coordination and the intensification of national, regional and international efforts to combat it in a comprehensive manner".

However, the largest burden of such efforts must fall to the domestic leadership, which must mobilize all elements of society. The special session has created a global awareness of the problem, which we all should take seriously. Its Declaration of Commitment should be translated into national platforms to combat this problem in all its forms and manifestations.

In regard to conflict prevention and peace-building, the United Nations has been discussing this issue since the early 1990s. As the United Nations seeks to move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention, there is a growing consensus that an effective United Nations prevention strategy requires a concerted multi-actor strategy with a focus on long-term economic and social factors. There is generally a consensus that timely action by the international community to prevent violent conflict can be difficult for a variety of reasons. One is that it is hard to identify situations that are appropriate for preventive action; secondly, mobilizing resources for preventive action is a challenge in the absence of actual violence; and thirdly, external intervention is often not welcomed by potential belligerents.

There have emerged two schools of thought on the future role of the United Nations in the prevention of violent conflicts. One school maintains that the United Nations should continue to play a central role in preventive diplomacy. This could be achieved by strengthening the United Nations, through its Secretary-General, the Department of Political Affairs, key partners within the United Nations system and a greater willingness of the Security Council to act preventively. The other school would argue that the responsibility for prevention should devolve to regional organizations and other actors. Cambodia's experience seems to point to the second alternative as the more plausible course to follow.

Of course, the proliferation of small arms is conducive to conflict and fighting, but the root cause of the problem is not small arms, which can be supplied by eager traffickers anytime and anywhere when the fertile ground of potential conflict is there. Just as we treat a sick person, we should combat this illness with drugs and, sometimes, with surgery. However, to prevent illness, that person should do regular exercise and generally follow a lifestyle that is conducive to good health and to building up his or her resistance against illness. Likewise, conflict prevention should not only mean preventive diplomacy and peacemaking after conflict, but should also address structural conflict prevention, which deals with the underlying causes of conflict, such as the lack of democracy, human rights and economic and social development. Thus, we should not focus only on providing United Nations resources for preventive action. We should look upon the collective efforts of peace-building by the entire United Nations family and other actors to develop the country, which should also be categorized as building a culture of prevention.

In conclusion, allow me to join other representatives in expressing my sincere congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election to the post of Secretary-General. His long and extensive experience in the United Nations has afforded him a deep insight into the challenges that the United Nations has faced. I am convinced that, with his humble skills, commitment and his outstanding vision and leadership, Mr. Kofi Annan will be able to accomplish his noble mission successfully.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): I wish, first of all, to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization. I wish also to congratulate him on his election for a second term.

His report has been rendered more relevant by the tragic events of 11 September and the heinous act of terrorism that not only affects our host city and country, but has also seriously impacted the work of our Organization. We therefore welcome the decision to discuss, on 1 October in the plenary, measures to eliminate terrorism. Myanmar would like to put on record that we oppose terrorism in all forms and manifestations.

The Secretary-General's report underlines the importance of strengthening our Organization's role in safeguarding peace and security and the need to strengthen its capacity to adjust to changing

international circumstances. He terms this the "tradition of innovation".

The United Nations is the universal Organization based on state sovereignty. I therefore fully agree with the Secretary-General that, in preserving this tradition of innovation, the principles of the Charter must be maintained. As we look to the future to meet the new challenges, the Charter's principles must form the bedrock of our Organization.

In our search for peace and security, arms control and disarmament are of critical importance. The Secretary-General's report has again underscored the fact that in the Millennium Declaration the world's leaders committed themselves to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Myanmar therefore shares the disappointment expressed in the report regarding the low level of international cooperation in disarmament, particularly at the Conference on Disarmament. Myanmar looks forward to the commencement of negotiations on disarmament on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator and the mandate entrusted to him.

We once again call upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish on a priority basis an ad hoc committee to deal with nuclear disarmament and to commence negotiations for a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, the convening at an early date of an international conference on disarmament in all its respects would enable us to identify and deal with concrete measures to achieve nuclear disarmament.

Let me now turn to another issue, an issue of critical importance to the international community. This is the HIV/AIDS pandemic, to which the Secretary-General paid personal attention through his recent initiative. The recently concluded twenty-sixth special session, on HIV/AIDS, underscored the need for a global effort to combat the disease. The international community has confirmed its commitment to intensify efforts nationally, regionally and internationally.

Myanmar is also fully aware of the tremendous toll that the disease could exact, not only on the people affected but also on society as a whole. HIV/AIDS has therefore been designated as a disease of national concern in Myanmar, and, accordingly, we are committed to using all available resources to combat it. We will also continue to cooperate with national, regional and international partners on this matter.

Let me now turn to another issue of importance highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General: sustainable development. The Secretary-General reports that despite the efforts of Governments in both developed and developing countries, of the United Nations system and of the private sector, the challenge of achieving sustainability remains to be met. Myanmar views sustainable development as the harmonious integration of a sound and viable economy, responsible governance, social cohesion and harmony and ecological integrity to ensure that development is a life-enhancing process. At the national level we have devoted considerable energy and resources in the implementation of Myanmar Agenda 21. National action, as well as regional and international action, is indispensable in addressing the challenge of achieving sustainable development. We therefore look forward to cooperating with the international community at the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held at Johannesburg in 2002.

Another, equally important, international conference is to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002. That is the International Conference on Financing for Development. That Conference will give us an opportunity to address the issue of economic development in a comprehensive and holistic manner. It will be the first time that trade, finance and development authorities will have a chance to sit down together to find ways and means to address development issues in all their aspects. We hope that the Conference will result in concrete, substantial and meaningful outcomes.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the report he has submitted to us on the work of the Organization in document A/56/1, which offers a framework for reference and discussion on the broad agenda being carried out by the United Nations. The report is a clear sign that the United Nations, and the Secretary-General in particular, are moving forward with the mandate given to them by the Member States. That is why I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate to Mr. Kofi Annan the complete satisfaction of the

Government of the Republic of Paraguay at his election to a second mandate. We are convinced that with his leadership he will bring the United Nations closer to the peoples and adapt the Organization to new and important challenges and to the new reality imposed on it today by international politics and events.

In paragraph 4 of his report, the Secretary-General states:

> "During the past year, we have witnessed striking contrasts on the international scene, both encouraging developments and dangerous threats."

Who could have imagined that this reflection would have materialized in the tragic events of 11 September, to which we were eyewitnesses? The Government of the Republic of Paraguay believes that the cowardly terrorist acts perpetrated against the United States of America are also an attack on the free, democratic, civilized and peace-loving world. As the Secretary-General has correctly said, those attacks were not only attacks against New York and the United States; they were attacks against the entire world. Therefore we must remain united in our struggle against terrorism in all its forms.

These horrible events have given a distinctive turn to what we thought at the beginning of the twenty-first century. For this reason the community of nations must assume a resolute and firm commitment in favour of international peace and progress so as to preserve for future generations a legacy of democracy, peace and security, as established by the Charter of the United Nations.

Next week in this very Hall, Member States will have an opportunity to debate agenda item 166, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism". My delegation welcomes the decision to do so and stands ready to participate actively in the discussions. We also wish to pledge our wholehearted and decisive support so that the Organization may play its proper role firmly, energetically and unequivocally with regard to this issue.

The areas covered by the report are certainly very important, but, given the time allotted to us, we shall focus on a few elements we consider to be priorities for our country.

The implementation of the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration and the other commitments undertaken in other forums of the Organization in the context of development is still among the greatest and most urgent challenges to be met in the years to come.

In this connection, two important meetings will take place next year. The International Conference on Financing for Development, which is to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, will offer an unprecedented opportunity to collectively examine with all the actors involved the issue of mobilizing development resources and using them effectively. Likewise, the Rio+10 Summit, which is to be held in Johannesburg, will give the international community an opportunity to examine all aspects of sustainable development in a comprehensive manner.

We are pleased with the fact that the report devotes a section to the situation of least developed countries and to the important conference held in Brussels in May of this year. Nevertheless, we believe that the report should have made some mention of the situation of landlocked countries and small island developing States. Due to their physical and geographic circumstances, which hamper their development, these are the most disadvantaged countries among developing States. They therefore run a greater risk of being marginalized and of not having the same access to the benefits of globalization as other developing countries.

We fully agree with the Secretary-General — and with most of the speakers that have spoken before me — that the eradication of poverty is the most difficult battle facing the Organization and the international community. That was clearly and firmly highlighted at the highest level during the Millennium Summit. Globalization must be the instrument that enables all nations to develop within an inclusive and equitable framework so that all may benefit from its many advantages.

We also agree with the Secretary-General that we must accelerate the economic growth of developing countries to eradicate poverty. But how can that be done? How are we going to achieve economic development — and therefore overcome poverty — if developing countries, and landlocked countries in particular, are at a greater disadvantage with regard to international trade and are more isolated from global markets.

As everyone knows, one of the most serious problems faced by landlocked countries is the cost of

transportation. It is also well known that this is a decisive factor in the foreign trade of any country, and that it has a serious impact on the possibility of expanding trade and, as a result, of achieving more accelerated economic development. Until developed countries and other developing countries open their markets to the goods and commodities of poor countries, lift their non-tariff measures and dismantle their farming subsidies, no effort to reduce poverty will be successful and we will not be able to reach the goals set in the Millennium Declaration.

That fact was emphasized by the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions — which took place in May of this year and which is also mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General. At the same meeting it was also acknowledged that the trade protectionism practised by developed countries, particularly that in the agricultural sector, prevent developing countries from fully benefiting from trade. Developing countries must have fair access to markets in order to benefit equally from the multilateral trading system.

My delegation believes that one of the most striking developments of the past year was the submission by the Secretary-General of the report on the prevention of armed conflict. We fully agree with him that early prevention of armed conflict forces us to look at the deep-rooted and structural causes of crises. Regrettably, we see that this has not received the same consideration and analysis from Member States that the Brahimi report did. We feel that we should begin an exhaustive study of the report as soon as possible and review its recommendations in order to move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention.

We also reiterate the importance of promptly establishing the International Criminal Court, especially at this time. Paraguay ratified the Rome Statute as a sign of its commitment to justice, peace and international law. We await its entry into force.

This year's report also reflects the United Nations efforts in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The holding of the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS — whose purpose was to examine all aspects of the problem for the first time at the highest level — and the results achieved by it, are to be commended. In this connection, we reiterate our support for the proposal to establish a global fund against AIDS to support in particular the countries most affected and having the greatest need.

Finally, I would like to reiterate our thanks to the Secretary-General for the report under consideration, as that report will be a useful instrument in the work to be done in the future in the various areas of activity of the Organization.

Mr. Naidu (Fiji): My Government highly commends the incisive report of the Secretary-General. However, Fiji laments the fact that its charismatic impact has been severely overtaken by the cold-blooded, vicious terrorist attacks that took place two weeks ago in our host country — although it helps us perhaps to understand some of the context of those attacks. Nonetheless, we congratulate the Secretary-General for his many tireless efforts, which are candidly summarized in this report.

There are many lessons to be learned from our varying experiences of horror and anger due to the recent tragedies. There are also a good number of insightful thoughts and narratives in the Secretary-General's report. The reflections of my delegation will refer primarily to the numerous efforts to maintain international security and peace. Most important among those is the new cultural direction envisaged by the report. It is a timely shift, which the Secretary-General now wishes to reinforce, for the United Nations to move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. Although this vision preceded the deplorable terrorist attacks, the attacks more than underscore the urgency of undertaking preventive diplomacy in the complexities of modern political interactions.

Fiji has in the past drawn on its extensive experience in peacekeeping. We have increasingly spoken of the value of maintaining peace in preventing a situation from building into conflict when the need for peacekeeping becomes imminent. Peace maintenance should be our prior goal, failing which, peacekeeping, in the planned reforms, should be reoriented and re-equipped to lay the groundwork for more profound and lasting peace-building. Our position resonates well with the view of the President of the Security Council in February, that a well-planned peace-building strategy has a positive role in conflict prevention.

We echo the Secretary-General's sentiments about the increasing role that Member States and regional

and subregional organizations can play, in partnership with the United Nations, in peace-building, peacekeeping and peacemaking. Close cooperation between the United Nations and relevant regional organizations has so far yielded productive results towards that goal. Fiji is confident that similar progress stands to be gained in cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum, which will be discussed under a new agenda item at the fifty-sixth session.

The report correctly reflects the prevailing winds of peace blowing in our Asia-Pacific region. Amicable relations and perseverance between the respective parties have brought about a peaceful settlement in Bougainville. Likewise, we endorse the Secretary-General's earnest plea to administering agencies to seek peaceful resolutions to their troubled respective territories, and his view that the best solutions for these can be found from within each State, in the democratic norms and human rights framework to which all Member States adhere. In our region, we will continue to support United Nations efforts to assist in ongoing democratic reforms, as indeed we have in East Timor. We look forward to continuing progress in the reform process and to witnessing its positive impact on the remaining territories that are identified in the report.

The report continues to remind us that the greatest losers in any conflict are commonly the innocent, helpless victims who are ordinarily vulnerable and who fare the worst in conflict situation. Women, children, the aged and the disabled form a sizeable portion of any population, easily fall prey to battles between warring parties and are often defenceless.

We applaud the inroads being made by the women's lobby in the area of international peace and security. The gender perspective they have added to the world view of conflict is a positive dimension that is now triggering cultural change. We celebrate that positive change, which is taking place in our lifetime and only one year since the Security Council debate on that subject, the subsequent conference and the adoption of a resolution.

We cannot agree more about the need for sustained peacekeeping in Africa in the foreseeable future. Again, Fiji reiterates its willingness to commit its peacekeeping resources and to apply the skills and experience it has gained from numerous United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The report properly reflects on the scale of the sizeable humanitarian operations that directly result from conflicts or civil unrest. The direct correlation between the two is getting out of control in some areas, and continues to escalate. Cultivating a culture of conflict prevention and of peace is an ideal way to address some of these difficult questions. This renewed vision may increasingly see the delivery of peacekeeping and of humanitarian services in tandem, as opposed to their being discrete and independent of each other.

Again, our congratulations go to the Secretary-General on the hard work of the past year and on the resulting comprehensive report.

Mr. Fruchtbaum (Grenada): Once again the Secretary-General and his associates have performed the miracle of preparing their report on the work of the Organization (A/56/1). It is a document that reviews the recent past, illuminates the present and indicates the issues that are well on the way to becoming crucial in the near future. In paragraph 5, for example, the Secretary-General observes that

> "universal ideas — the sovereignty of the people, accountability of leaders, individual rights, and the rule of law — are spreading around the world".

Some of the implications of that for our work here have long been apparent, but an idea such as the sovereignty of the people will require us and those who come after us to think in new directions.

Recent events underscore the importance of one of the major themes of the report: the rule of law in international affairs. In paragraph 9, the Secretary-General states that

> "The quest of the United Nations to build a world of order and justice can be achieved only through respect for the rule of law in international affairs. The growth of international law, the ratification of international treaties, and the prosecution of war criminals by international tribunals will help to ensure that ruthless force does not prevail."

My delegation read with considerable interest the section on "Enhancing the rule of law" beginning with

paragraph 216. The Secretary-General observes in paragraph 219 that

> "Many States fail to sign or ratify treaties, not because of any lack of political will, but because of a simple shortage of technical expertise when it comes to the implementation of treaty provisions."

For my delegation, the efforts of the Office of Legal Affairs, in cooperation with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, to address this problem are welcome indeed. The demands of the reporting obligations of treaties, however, will remain for a significant number of States a serious difficulty that will require assistance to overcome.

My delegation wholeheartedly agrees with the Secretary-General when he writes this in paragraph 221: "That the law should be accessible to those whom it is meant to guide is a central precept of the rule of law", and we note with satisfaction the undertaking by the Office of Legal Affairs to make available on the Internet the complete texts of the over 50,000 treaties that were registered with the Secretariat before May 1998.

As useful as this will be to those with an interest in international law, an even greater effort is required. The United Nations system, working in cooperation with Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, must mobilize the necessary resources to create a long-term programme designed to make an introduction to the basic concepts and principles of international law and international humanitarian law a fundamental part of every young person's education. Without such an undertaking, our quest, to quote the Secretary-General, "to build a world of order and justice ... through respect for the rule of law in international affairs" (*A/56/1, para. 9*) is unlikely to succeed. We will have more to say about this proposal in other forums.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 10.

The meeting rose at 12. 45 p.m.